

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Alabama Department of Public Safety

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### **Troopers Step Up Enforcement, Take Part In CIOT Blitz** ***Urge Holiday Motorists to Buckle Up, Drive Safely During Memorial Day***

MONTGOMERY — Alabama motorists can expect an increase in patrols throughout the Memorial Day travel period as troopers step up enforcement in response to heavy holiday traffic. Troopers and local officers also will hold checkpoints in connection with the Click It or Ticket safety belt enforcement blitz May 23-June 5. The CIOT period includes the Memorial Day travel weekend, May 27-30, and All American Buckle Up Week, May 23-30.

“Make sure every person is buckled up on every trip,” said Col. Mike Coppage, Public Safety director. “Buckling up can save you from a ticket, but more importantly, it could well save your life in the event of a traffic crash.” According to Coppage, despite gains in safety belt usage rates statewide, more than half of vehicle occupants killed in rural crashes in Alabama this year were not using safety restraints.

Along with the advisory to buckle up, Coppage encouraged motorists to drive with caution, practicing patience and courtesy toward other motorists and obeying all traffic laws. During the holiday enforcement period, he said troopers will ticket motorists who fail to comply with the state’s safety belt and child restraint laws, and they will also be on the lookout for all other traffic violations, including speeding and driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs.

Troopers will concentrate patrols on popular vacation routes as part of Operation CARE, Combined Accident Reduction Effort. CARE is a cooperative effort by state police nationwide to advance traffic safety during holiday periods through enforcement and safety education. Designated CARE highways for this holiday period will include all interstates, and U.S. 231 and 331 south of Montgomery. Memorial Day and All American Buckle Up Week are featured CARE holiday periods.

The Department of Public Safety estimates that 17 people may die as the result of traffic crashes in Alabama during the 78-hour Memorial Day holiday travel period beginning Friday, May 27, at 6 p.m. and ending at midnight Monday, May 30.

Last year 17 people died in traffic crashes in the state during the 78-hour holiday period. At least six of these fatalities involved alcohol, and seven of those killed were not buckled up. Fifteen of the deaths resulted from crashes on the state’s rural roads, and two of the fatal crashes occurred in urban locations.

***May 23, 2005***

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